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## CITY OF GREENVILLE

POLICY NO. HR-27

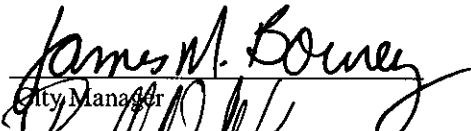
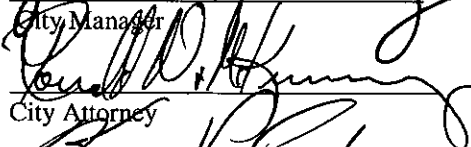
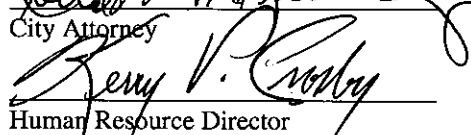
DATE: May 3, 2005

SUBJECT: Public Information

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APPROVALS:

  
City Manager  
  
City Attorney  
  
Human Resource Director

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the timely, accurate and legally compliant dissemination of information on City of Greenville programs, projects, services, activities and functions.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all employees and departments of the City of Greenville.

3. Policy

- 3.1. It is the policy of the City of Greenville to provide accurate, timely and legally-compliant dissemination of information to the citizens of Greenville, using a variety of media. The functioning of city government and support by citizens for city government programs and policies will be enhanced if the city organization is seen by citizens as speaking with one voice, using channels such as proactive media relations plus effective print and electronic publications.

4. Procedures

- 4.1. Responsibility - The Public Information Manager will be responsible for coordinating department activities covered by this policy and for monitoring compliance with this policy.
- 4.2. Department heads may assign employees within their departments to serve as department public information officers. These employees will work with, but will not be subordinate to, the Public Information Manager.
- 4.3. Public Information Manager Duties – Duties of the Public Information Manager will include:
- 4.3.1. Working with the Public Information Team and Leadership Team to develop Strategic Communications Plan to capitalize on opportunities for promoting positive messages about city government policies and programs.
- 4.3.2. Working with the Public Information Team and Leadership Team to coordinate and thus, maximize, effectiveness of public information activities, utilizing all available media.
- 4.3.3. Working with the City Manager and appropriate department heads to plan message content and media utilized to communicate messages related to specific programs, policies and issues.
- 4.3.4. Developing and maintaining effective, ongoing relationships with members of the news media.

- 4.3.5. Organizing training for those employees who have responsibility for interacting with members of the news media.
- 4.3.6. Writing, editing, seeking approval for and distributing news media releases, fact sheets and other materials.
- 4.3.7. Assisting departments with public information planning.
- 4.3.8. Directing the activities of support personnel, including the ACS TV/Webmaster, and TV production personnel of Charter Communications.
- 4.3.9. Serving as organization spokesperson, as appropriate.
- 4.3.10. Assisting other persons who serve as spokespersons with message development, preparation of materials, scheduling, and other tasks.
- 4.4. Public Information Team – The Public Information Manager will meet with the Leadership Team each week to orchestrate public information activities for maximum effectiveness. Members of the Public Information Team will meet quarterly to discuss overall communications strategies and needs.
  - 4.4.1. Members of the Public Information Team will include representatives of the following departments: Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Economic and Community Development Department and Community Services Department.
  - 4.4.2. The Public Information Manager and Public Information Team will be assisted by the City TV/Web Developer (working through ACS).
- 4.5. Publications and Electronic Media - City departments may utilize a wide variety of media to communicate information to the public. The Public Information Manager will assist City departments in the planning for and proper use of printed publications, electronic media and other communications resources. To enhance the professionalism and effectiveness of publications, the design and content of all publications and electronic media must be approved, in advance, by the Public Information Manager.
- 4.6. Graphics Standards - The City's logo and seal are used to identify City government services, offices, vehicles, buildings, employees, correspondence etc. To maintain a high level of professionalism and consistency in the use of the logo and seal, all applications of these features must meet the graphics standards guidelines established by the Public Information Team. This applies to such items as apparel, merchandise, stationary, and signage. Any variation from the established design standards must be approved, in advance, by the Public Information Manager.

4.7. Media Relations - The news media plays a key role in disseminating information about City government to citizens. Good relations with the news media are critical to the proper communication of City policy and programs.

4.7.1. Media Relations Guidelines - The media relations actions of all employees will be guided by the following procedures. Employees:

- 4.7.1.1. Will direct all inquiries regarding individual council members, council actions or the actions of City boards and commissions to the Public Information Officer and refrain from anticipating an action or position which has not been formally taken by City Council or city management. Any inquiry on "why" an individual councilmember voted in a particular manner will be forwarded to the councilmember in question and the Public Information Officer will be notified about the inquiry. The business phone numbers and email addresses of council members may be provided to the news media.
- 4.7.1.2. Will respond quickly and with accuracy to media inquiries when related to carrying out the employee's responsibilities for the City. If a member of the news media makes an inquiry which falls outside those responsibilities, the staff member who receives the inquiry will direct the media representative to the Public Information Manager.
- 4.7.1.3. Will provide accurate and complete information to media representatives.
- 4.7.1.4. Will refer all media inquiries regarding any city litigation, potential or filed cases to the City Attorney's Office and notify the Public Information Manager about the inquiry.
- 4.7.1.5. Will direct all media inquiries regarding employee or personnel actions to the Human Resource Director and notify the Public Information Manager about the request.
- 4.7.1.6. Will work with the Public Information Manager to coordinate media relations and assist the news media with story research and background briefings on specific issues, programs or initiatives.
- 4.7.1.7. Will inform the Public Information Manager, as soon as possible, of any and all contacts directed to or initiated by members of the news media.
- 4.7.1.8. Will inform the Public Information Manager before initiating any contacts with the media.

4.7.1.9. Will work with the City Attorney's Office to respond to requests for public records submitted under the Freedom of Information Act (see 4.9, below) and notify the Public Information Manager about the request.

#### 4.8. Public Meetings

4.8.1. Departments will notify the Public Information Manager of all planned public meetings so that the meetings can be effectively advertised.

4.8.2. Agendas for all public meetings must be posted at least 24 hours in advance on a bulletin board in the office of the meeting place.

4.8.3. The City Clerk will provide the news media written notice of all planned meetings of City Council and citizen advisory committees appointed by Council.

4.9. Freedom of Information Act Compliance - The City of Greenville is responsible for complying with the S.C. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Procedures for responding to FOIA requests may be found in HR-31, Public Records.